

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSC-05 L-03

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R 101740Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3026

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 1988

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, AL, MO, SP, SS

SUBJ: SPANISH SAHARA: F POLISARIO RELEASES SPANISH PRISONERS

REF: FBIS LONDON 091428Z SEPT. 75 AND 091743Z SEPT. 75 (BOTH
NOTAL); ALGIERS 1796

1. OFFICIAL ALGERIAN DAILY EL MOUDJAHID ANNOUNCED ON FRONT
PAGE AND WITH PHOTO THAT ON SEPT. 9 SAHARAN INDEPENDENCE
GROUP, F POLISARIO, HAD RELEASED 13 SPANISH OFFICERS AND
SOLDIERS CAPTURED IN COLONY MAY 9. F POLISARIO REP,
DESCRIBED BY ALGERIAN RADIO AS QTE SECY GEN. UNQTE,
TURNED MEN OVER TO SPANISH AMBASSADOR IN ALGIERS WHO WAS
ACCOMPANIED BY SEVERAL OTHER SPANISH REPRESENTATIVES.
EL MOUDJAHID ACCUNT NOTED THAT ALGERIAN RED CRESCENT HAD
ACTED AS INTERMEDIARY IN MATTER. PAPER ALSO SAID TWO
SPANISH SOLDIERS RELEASED BY F POLISARIO EARLIER IN
SUMMER HAD BEEN FREED QTE UNCONDITIONALLY UNQTE. IN
STATEMENT AT CEREMONY, F POLISARIO REP NOTED SPAIN'S
WISH TO PUT END TO ITS PRESENCE IN SAHARA AND INDICATED
THAT THIS ATTITUDE HAD DIRECTLY AFFECTED FRONT'S
DECISION TO FREE PRISONERS.

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3. SPANISH EMBOFF COMMENTED TO DCM THAT F POLISARIO

MAY HAVE TAKEN THIS STEP BOTH TO IMPROVE ITS IMAGE IN EYES OF UPCOMING UNGA AND ALSO IN BELIEF THAT GESTURE OF THIS KIND WAS ONLY WAY IN WHICH FRONT COULD OBTAIN FURTHER CONCESSIONS FROM MADRID. EMBOFF SAID THAT NEITHER GOA NOR FONMIN CORTINA, WHO VISITED HERE SEPT. 8-9, HAD PLAYED ANY DIRECT ROLE IN NEGOTIATIONS ALTHOUGH MEMBERS OF CORTINA'S PARTY HAD SEEN F PLISIARIO REPS DURING VISIT. SPANISH SAHARA, EMBOFF ADDED, WAS ONLY ONE OF LONG LIST OF MATTERS WHICH CORTINA HAD DISCUSSED DURING HIS STAY HERE.

4. COMMENT: WE DOUBT SPANISH EMBOFF'S ASSERTION THAT GOA AND CORTINA PLAYED NO ROLE IN RELEASE. FONMIN OFFICIAL TOLD US LAST MONTH THAT GOA WAS NEGOTIATING RELEASES THROUGH F POLISARIO HERE (ALGIERS 1796), AND EL MOUDJAHID'S ACCOUNT MAKES IT CLEAR THAT GOA'S RELATIONS WITH FRONT ARE CLOSE. REASONS SPANISH EMBOFF GAVE FOR FRONT'S DECISIONS TO FREE MEN SEEM PLAUSIBLE.
PARKER

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